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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 006766

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: TURKISH MFA AND ANKARA REP DENY IRAQI TURKMEN
FRONT IS BOYCOTTING ELECTIONS

REF: BAGHDAD 1916

Classified By: PolMilCouns Timothy A. Betts for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

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1. (C) PolMilOff contacted both the Ankara Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF) representative, Ahmet Muratli, as well as the MFA Iraq Desk, to see if we could verify reftel report that the ITF had signed a statement calling for a boycott of Jan. 30 elections in Iraq. Muratli strongly denied that the ITF sought an election boycott, and also denied that the ITF had signed the statement of the Iraqi National Foundation Congress. Muratli explained that a senior leader of the ITF, Cemal San, had attended the Iraqi National Foundation Congress meeting which produced the statement, but only in his capacity as an observer from the "Iraq Supreme Election Council." (Note: We think Muratli may have meant the IECI, but we have not been able to confirm if San is an IECI member. End note.) He repeated that San did not sign the statement nor did the ITF endorse it in any way. Muratli went on to say that San had appeared on Turkmeneli television in Iraq to deny reports that the ITF supported an election boycott, and that Muratli himself had also released a statement to this effect.

2. (C) MFA Iraq Desk Director Avni Botsali also emphatically denied that the ITF supported an election boycott.

3. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.
EDELMAN